

LOUISIANA TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

NRCS CONFERENCE ROOM

LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA

JULY 17, 2008

RECORD OF AGENDA ITEMS AND COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Kevin Norton, NRCS State Conservationist, opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m., and welcomed the meeting participants. (See attendance list attached.) Each member introduced themselves to the committee. Norton reviewed the agenda and commented on the highlights of items to be discussed.

The last committee meeting minutes were attached to their meeting letter. The minutes were accepted.

◆ EQIP, WHIP and WRP UPDATE

Leslie Michael, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, gave a FY 2008 Farm Bill Program update.

Michael discussed the FY 2008 EQIP Program. Louisiana received an additional \$8,500,000 after passage of the 2008 Farm Bill bringing the state's total FY 2008 EQIP allocation to approximately \$21,000,000. The total contracts were 818 as of the date of this meeting.

Louisiana received an additional \$500,000 after the passage of the 2008 Farm Bill bringing the total FY 2008 WHIP allocation for the state to approximately \$1,100,000. The total applications received were 168 with 78 applications promoted to contracts as of the date of this meeting.

Michael discussed the FY 2008 WRP Program. The Louisiana program has received 14 total WRP applications for approximately 12,000 acres.

Norton reported the 2008 Farm Bill Program bill passed one and one-half months ago. Louisiana had already received \$13,000,000 for EQIP prior to the passing of the Farm Bill. The money received is used to put conservation on the ground in Louisiana to benefit the natural resources. All programs rules and regulations developed under the new Farm Bill Program will start October 1, 2008, Fiscal Year 2009. When the rules and regulations are written for these programs and then NRCS will have the authorization to proceed in Fiscal Year 2009. A state technical advisory committee meeting will be called when all the current information has been received to review with the committee. NRCS will notify State Technical Advisory Committee members as proposed rules are released.

◆ **NATIONAL, STATE and LOCAL RESOURCES PRIORITIES**

Steve Carmichael, NRCS State Resource Conservationist, discussed National, State and Local Resource Priorities for Fiscal Year 2009. At the last state technical advisory committee meeting on May 28, all the resource concerns that were identified through the locally led process at the parish level throughout the state were presented. All committee members present were asked to prioritize the concerns. Because there was a much larger cross section of the state technical advisory committee membership present at this meeting (July 17, 2008), all members present were given a second opportunity to prioritize and rank statewide concerns.

The results were as follows:

<u>Resource Concern</u>	<u>May 28</u>	<u>July 17</u>
Animals – Fish and Wildlife Habitat Fragmentation	4	13
Water – Water Quality Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Surface Water	11	6
Plants – Plant Condition Noxious and Invasive Plants	5	6
Water – Water Quantity Inefficient Water Use on Irrigated Land	1	5
Animals – Fish and Wildlife Threatened and Endangered Fish and Wildlife Species, Fish and Wildlife Species Listed or Proposed for Listing Under the Endangered species Act	1	4
Animals – Fish and Wildlife Inadequate Cover / Shelter	4	3
Soil – Soil Erosion Sheet and Rill	1	3
Water – Water Quantity Excessive Runoff Flooding or Ponding	3	3

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Soil – Soil Condition	3	3
Organic Matter Depletion		

<u>Resource Concern</u>	<u>May 28</u>	<u>July 17</u>
Water – Water Quality	2	3
Excessive Suspended Sediment and Turbidity		
Animals – Fish and Wildlife	1	3
Threatened and Endangered Fish and Wildlife		
Species: Declining Species, Species of Concern		
Plants – Plant Condition	0	3
Productivity Health and Vigor		
Water – Water Quality	2	2
Excessive Salinity in Surface Water		
Animals – Domestic Animals	3	2
Inadequate Quantities and Quality of Feed and Forage		
Water – Water Quality	1	2
Harmful Levels of Pathogens in Surface Water		
Water – Water Quantity	1	2
Aquifer Overdraft		
Animals – Fish and Wildlife	3	1
Imbalance Among and Within Populations		
Soil – Soil Erosion	1	1
Shoreline		
Animals – Domestic Animals	2	0
Inadequate Shelter		
Water – Water Quality	1	0
Harmful Levels of Petroleum in Groundwater		
Plants – Threatened or Endangered Plant Species	1	0
Declining Species, Species of Concern		
Soil – Soil Condition	1	0
Subsidence		

Soil Erosion	1	0
Streambank		

<u>Resource Concern</u>	<u>May 28</u>	<u>July 17</u>
Animals – Domestic Animals	1	0
Stress and Mortality		

Water – Quantity	1	0
Reduced Capacity of Conveyances by		
Sediment Deposition		

◆ **DISCUSSION**

Jess Barr, Louisiana Cotton Producers Association, expressed concerns on how the resource concerns are being ranked. Barr has participated in several parish led meetings and thought that the resource concerns identified in the local meetings were a true reflection of what the actual resource concern are for those parishes. The parish concerns and the state concerns are not the same. Barr expressed concerns that members participating at the State Technical Advisory Committee Meeting level are not actual users of the Farm Bill Programs and that ranking concerns at the state technical advisory committee level does not necessarily reflect the concerns desired for implementation at ground level.

Jeff Durand, Louisiana Rice Growers Association, commented he represents the rice growers and he would vote what he felt was best for the rice growers.

Stephen Minville, Louisiana Crawfish Farmers Association, commented that agricultural producers are on the recipient side of the EQIP program. Other state technical advisory committee members don't have a vested financial interest as the agricultural producers do and this leans the voting process one-sided.

Norton commented the law and regulations requires all parties interested in natural resource conservation in Louisiana will be invited to State Technical Advisory Committee Meetings. In Louisiana a broad range of agricultural producer organizations, state and federal agencies, wildlife and environmental groups are invited to state technical advisory committee because they have a vested interest in the collective natural resources of Louisiana. These producers and producer organizations need to attend the meetings to voice their opinions.

Norton also explained the way resource priorities are used in the program application ranking process. National resource concern priorities count for

10% of the ranking points of a participant's application, state level resource concern priorities count for a minimum of 20% of the application ranking points and the remainder of the ranking points (up to 70%) are based on locally identified resource concern priorities. The proportion of the ranking points allocated between state and local resource concerns is determined at the local level by the Soil and Water Conservation District.

◆ **RANKING PROCESS AND CRITERIA FOR 2009**

Tim Landreneau, NRCS Program Specialist, discussed the ranking process and criteria for Fiscal Year 2009. The Farm Bill Program application ranking process consists of four elements: 1) Cost Efficiencies; 2) National Resource Issues; 3) State Resource Issues; and 4) Local Resource Issues.

Michael discussed the allocation model for the 2009 Farm Bill Programs. A 60% base allocation will be divided between all the local soil and water conservation districts across the state, with an additional 25% initial allocation "bump" based on acres in the district needing treatment related to state-wide concerns. The remaining 15% will be allocated for special initiatives across the state.

◆ **PROGRAM PRACTICES FOR 2009**

Norton commented on the handout for program practices for 2009. If anyone has a question call or email Leslie Michael on the program practices.

◆ **CLOSING COMMENTS**

Norton encouraged members to contact him with questions or concerns. He encouraged members to promote increased state technical committee meeting participation as they interact with other organizations and their counterparts.

- ◆ **Next Meeting Date** – No meeting date was set. Members will be notified when the date is scheduled.

12: 30 p.m. – Meeting Adjourned

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LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA

JULY 17, 2008

LIST OF ATTENDEES

Kevin D. Norton, USDA-NRCS
Steve Carmichael, USDA-NRCS
Leslie Michael, USDA-NRCS
Tim Landreneau, USDA-NRCS
Johanna Pate, USDA-NRCS
Dawn Newman, USDA-NRCS
Bill Waits, USDA-NRCS
Steve Cruse, USDA-NRCS
Randolph Joseph, USDA-NRCS
Tom Doyle, USGS
John Bowie, USEPA
Carol Crapanzano, LDEQ
Physhima Parms-Green, LDEQ
Dwight Landreneau, LSU AgCenter
Dave Telesco, Black Bear Conservation Committee
Paul Coussan, Senator David Vitter's Office
Larry Reynolds, LDWF
Randy Meyers, LDWF
Richard Cambre, USDA-APHIS
Nathan Crisp, USDA-NASS
Dugan Sabins, LDEQ
Keith Aymond, LDAF
Barry Wilson, USGS
Stephen Minville, LCFA
Jess Barr, LCP
Rich Brontoli, RRVA
Dave Soileau, USFWS
Jeff Durand, LRGA/LCFA
Ron Harrell, LAFB
Brad Lamb, EPA